



Policies for tackling obesity and creating healthier food environments

**2019 progress update
Tasmanian Government**

March 2019

Further details available at
www.foodpolicyindex.org.au

**TAS
2019**

Executive summary

Unhealthy diets and obesity are leading contributors to poor health in Australia. Addressing obesity and improving population diets requires a comprehensive government response at Commonwealth and State/Territory levels.

In 2017, a Food Policy Index was developed for Australia to assess the food and diet-related policies that were in place in each jurisdiction, and identify recommended actions for each government based on international best practice.

This report provides a follow up to the 2017 Food Policy Index report. It summarises and assesses the actions taken by the Tasmanian Government (July 2016 – December 2018) in relation to the recommended policies identified in the 2017 report.

Key areas in which the Tasmanian Government has made progress



Funding a number of Healthy Tasmania innovations grants focussed on community access to local, healthy foods



Implementation of the Tasmanian School Canteen Accreditation program, leading to a rapid increase in the number of schools accredited and participating in the program



Engaging a wide range of partners through social media campaign messages developed by Eat Well Tasmania



Recommended action areas for the Tasmanian Government

The 2017 Food Policy Index report prioritised 18 recommendations for action. Recommended focus areas for the next 12-18 months are:



Support for communities: Scale-up and build on the Eat Well Tasmania *Veg It Up*, *Get Fruity*, and *What's in Season* campaigns to partner with local communities and other sectors including food growers and producers, food retailers, food service and tourism



Food retail: Provide a coordinated and ongoing commitment to support local communities to access healthy produce and promote healthy eating



Food promotion: Leverage action off the recommendations of the COAG Health Council to restrict the promotion of unhealthy food and beverages in settings controlled or managed by the Tasmanian Government

Healthy Food Environment Policy Index (Food-EPI)

In 2017, a Food Policy Index was developed for Australia to assess the extent to which governments in Australia were implementing globally recommended policies for tackling obesity and creating healthier food environments.¹

The project was conducted as part of INFORMAS,² an international network of food policy and public health experts. The project implemented the Healthy Food Environment Policy Index (Food-EPI) tool, developed by INFORMAS to assess government policy across 14 domains related to food environments and applied in >10 countries. As part of the Food-EPI Australia 2017 project, recommended actions for each government (Federal, State and Territory) were developed and prioritised, based on international best practice and consultation with >100 non-government public health experts representing 53 organisations.

Assessment of progress made

The Food-EPI Australia 2017 report identified and prioritised 18 recommended policy actions for the Tasmanian Government, as part of efforts to create healthier food environments and address obesity.

The purpose of this 2019 Progress Update was to assess progress made by the Tasmanian Government in relation to the recommended policy actions.

Government officials from each jurisdiction in Australia provided information on actions taken by their government in relation to the recommended actions from the Food-EPI Australia 2017 report. This included all activities from **July 2016** (the date up to which policies were assessed in the 2017 report) to **December 2018**.

The actions were summarised, and progress in relation to each recommendation was assessed by the project team as 'Substantive action', 'Some action' or 'Limited action', based on the criteria in Table 1. The full details of actions taken and progress made by other jurisdictions are available at: www.foodpolicyindex.org.au

Substantive action

- Implemented substantive action in relation to all or most components of the recommendation

Some action

- Implemented action in relation to some components of the recommendation; and/or
- Taken steps to initiate or formulate plans in relation to the recommendation, but relevant actions have not yet been implemented

Limited action

- Taken no substantive action in relation to the recommendation; and/or
- Made no or very limited progress in the area

Table 1: Criteria for assessment of progress made

¹ Sacks G for the Food-EPI Australia project team. Policies for tackling obesity and creating healthier food environments: scorecard and priority recommendations for Australian governments. Melbourne: Deakin University, 2017. Available at: www.foodpolicyindex.org.au

² www.informas.org

Actions taken (July 2016 - December 2018) by the Tasmanian Government in relation to the recommended policies from the 2017 Food Policy Index report

	Domain	Recommended policy action	Progress in relation to recommended action	Assessment
TAS1	Funding and resources	Establish and lead a collaborative, state-wide coalition (such as the Tasmanian Food and Nutrition Coalition), with a long-term commitment of resources, that aims to address population nutrition and obesity	The Premier's Health and Wellbeing Advisory Council has been established to provide advice to government on cross-sector and collaborative approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of Tasmanians, particularly in the areas of physical activity, smoking and healthy eating. The Tasmanian Government, through the Department of Health, funds several non-government organisations to run programs focussed on increasing nutrition and physical activity.	Some action
TAS2	Leadership	Provide resources for the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the 'Healthy Tasmania Strategy'	The Healthy Kids Toolkit website (deliverable of the Healthy Tasmania Strategy) and associated resources were successfully launched in 2017. In 2017-18, \$500,000 was made available for Healthy Tasmania Community Innovation Grants, of which \$25,000 went to healthy eating, physical activity, tobacco cessation and community. \$6.6 million will be available through the new Community Health Fund, to be launched in 2019, and prevention is anticipated to be included within the scope of this fund.	Substantive action
TAS3	Food provision	Establish a whole-of-government policy on healthy food provision that applies across all Tasmania Government departments and settings under government control	Tasmania has contributed to progressing five key actions through the COAG Health Council to limit the impact of unhealthy food and drinks on children across education, sport and recreation and public healthcare facilities. Once these actions are completed, this work will provide leverage for further action at the state level.	Some action
TAS4	Food provision	Provide strong incentives for all schools to implement the 'Move Well Eat Well' initiative (a health and wellbeing framework for schools) and associated Canteen Accreditation Program, strongly support and actively monitor implementation	The Tasmania Government continues to support the 'Move Well, Eat Well' initiative, and provides funding (up to 2021) for the Tasmanian School Canteen Association to promote healthy food / beverage provision in schools (supporting 63% of schools). The Healthy Tasmania Five Year Strategic Plan includes a commitment to have all Government schools working towards canteen accreditation by 2020, with \$100,000 going towards the Tasmanian School Canteen Association to achieve this goal, including some monitoring activities.	Substantive action
TAS5	Support for communities	Commit to ongoing, long-term support for healthy eating social marketing campaigns, potentially collaborating with the food production, food service, tourism and health sectors, as part of efforts to improve population nutrition	The Tasmanian Department of Health funded the Heart Foundation to run the <i>Live Lighter</i> campaign in Tasmania until 30 June 2018. Evaluation results will be considered as part of the broader planning framework for social marketing, conducted as part of Healthy Tasmania. Eat Well Tasmania Inc. (funded by the Government) has developed a series of connected healthy eating social media campaigns. The Healthy Tasmania Community Challenge was conducted in early 2018 over 12 weeks. This was an online healthy challenge with associated incentives. Evaluation showed strong participation.	Some action
TAS6	Food promotion	Implement policies to restrict the promotion of unhealthy food and beverages in settings controlled or managed by the Tasmania Government	Tasmania has contributed to progressing five key actions through the COAG Health Council to limit the impact of unhealthy food and drinks on children across education, sport and recreation and public healthcare facilities. Once finalised this work will provide useful tools and a foundation to leverage action across government controlled settings.	Some action
TAS7	Food retail	Work with supermarkets and retailers to improve availability of healthy foods and decrease availability / promotion of unhealthy foods in retail settings, using Eat Well Tasmania as a framework for engagement	Eat Well Tasmania Inc. (funded by the Tasmanian Government) has been pursuing opportunities to engage with the retail sector, in particular with IGA - this preliminary work is ongoing. Hill Street Grocers (a state-wide fresh produce outlet linked to IGA) was actively involved in Eat Well Tasmania's summer social media campaign of 2017/18 promoting the <i>Get Fruity and Veg It Up</i> messages.	Some action
TAS8	Food promotion	Require all organisations that receive funding from the Tasmania Government to restrict all promotion (including sponsorship) related to unhealthy food and beverages as a condition of receiving funding	The COAG Health Council is considering a series of actions to limit the impact of unhealthy food and drinks on children across education, sport and recreation and public healthcare facilities. The Tasmanian Government has also provided funding for the Alcohol and Drug Foundation's Good Sports program to expand their existing Good Sports programs and implement a "Good Sports Healthy Eating" program.	Some action

TAS9	Monitoring and intelligence	Implement ongoing monitoring of food environments, including the marketing of unhealthy foods to children, and the nutritional quality of food in schools and public sector settings	The Tasmanian School Canteen Accreditation Program monitors the menus of schools food service that have achieved canteen accreditation. This provides a breakdown of the number of schools accredited and the nutritional quality of the food provided by the percentage of green, amber and red foods on the menu.	Some action
TAS10	Monitoring and intelligence	Provide funding for oversampling for Tasmania in the triennial National Health Survey for the purposes of monitoring BMI and key nutrition indicators of children and adults	The sample size for Tasmania in the current NHS 2017/18 is deemed to be adequate as the Australian Bureau of Statistics has allocated more sample to Tasmania than expected under the "normal" allocation method. The Tasmanian Population Health Surveys monitors BMI and several nutrition indicators for adults.	Substantive action
TAS11	Monitoring and intelligence	Monitor prices of healthy and unhealthy foods across Tasmania every 3 years, through the Healthy Food Access Survey	The Tasmanian Government is maintaining a watching brief on a number of attempts in the academic sector to develop a national model for monitoring price and availability of healthy/unhealthy foods.	Some action
TAS12	Food retail	Provide co-ordinated support for local communities to access healthy produce and promote healthy eating, continuing the work of the Healthy Food Access Project	Eat Well Tasmania Inc. is funded to influence healthy eating in Tasmania and connect the local food industry with the community. Part of a funded program (2018-21) will involve promoting access to local produce through community, grower and local retailer networks. Multiple Healthy Tasmania Innovations grants (in 2017) focussed on community access to local, healthy foods.	Substantive action
TAS13	Support for communities	Improve support for school teachers to implement nutrition education as part of the national curriculum	The COAG Health Council is currently developing Good Practices for Supporting Healthy Eating and Drinking at Schools. A key component will support teaching and learning on nutrition and will provide leverage to support teachers to implement nutrition education as part of the national curriculum. Tasmania is taking an active lead in this work. The Move Well Eat Well program provides relevant curriculum units for teachers and Master of Education students, including how to implement nutrition education as part of the national curriculum.	Some action
TAS14	Food provision	Require that locally sourced foods constitute a given proportion (e.g., 25%) of the food provided in school canteens, as part of the 'Move Well Eat Well' initiative and / or the Canteen Accreditation Program	Whilst there is no requirement that local foods constitute a given proportion of the foods provided in school canteens, Eat Well Tasmania works closely with the Move Well Eat Well and Tasmanian School Canteen Accreditation programs to encourage use of local, seasonal produce and linking the programs to local growers and retailers.	Some action
TAS15	Governance	Implement formal health impact assessments as part of policy development processes, including explicit details about potential impacts of policies on population nutrition and health	No specific progress on this recommended policy action has occurred although the Department of Premier and Cabinet is considering exploring work on Health in All Policies during the 2018-19 financial year.	Limited action
TAS16	Food retail	Develop guidelines and offer co-ordinated support to local governments on ways to decrease access to unhealthy take-away foods through planning provisions	Public Health Services, in the Department of Health, is looking to explore the concept of liveable cities during 2018-19 including issues associated with the food environment.	Limited action
TAS17	Food retail	Develop and implement programs to incentivise sports and recreation venues and clubs to sell healthier foods and beverages whilst limiting unhealthy foods and beverages	The COAG Health Council is currently considering a series of actions to limit the impact of unhealthy food and drinks on children across education, sport and recreation and public healthcare facilities. This, along with recent funding, of the Good Sports program in Tasmania will provide opportunities to progress action in this area. The Alcohol and Drug Foundation has received 2 years funding (June 2018-2020) to implement the Good Sports Enhanced Community Clubs Program in community sporting clubs across Tasmania. This includes piloting the Good Sports Healthy Eating program which promotes healthy foods in clubs via healthy foods for fundraising, provision of water and a commitment to sell of healthy food and drinks.	Some action
TAS18	Food retail	Develop and implement programs to incentivise restaurants, pubs and clubs to improve the healthiness of their menu options, building on the 'Healthy Options Tasmania' approach	No specific progress has occurred since 2016.	Limited action

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The project forms part of INFORMAS (International Network for Food and Obesity/NCD's Research, Monitoring, Action and Support), a global network of public interest organisations and researchers that seek to monitor and benchmark public and private sector actions to create healthier food environments and reduce obesity and NCD's globally.

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For more details on the Healthy Food Environment Policy Index (Food-EPI) project go to: www.foodpolicyindex.org.au

